

WORK

195

are exchanged; (2) trade, or the selling of objects for currency, which occurs both between individuals and groups; (3) payments made for services. In all of these there is a form of exchange, but there are also some free gifts which we will first describe.

437

FREE GIFTS

There are a few gifts for which there is no counter gift, i.e. no exact return either in kind or currency is required. These gifts are of food and betel-nuts. The staple articles of food, taro, bananas, coconuts are never sold,¹ and are given to kindred, friends, and strangers passing through the village as an act of courtesy. There is no thought of payment in currency, or a return of the gift, but it is understood that everyone is acting on the same ethical assumption, and so even here there is a kind of reciprocity. If some people from Logagon are passing through Lesu, twenty-five miles away, they will be given food as a courtesy. If the Lesu people were in Logagon the same courtesy would be extended to them. If a man has a large catch of fish, he will partake of it himself and give part to his wife, her relatives, and the remainder to a friend or kin who is having a feast. It is understood that the friend will act in a similar way when the positions are reversed. There are also free gifts between certain kindred. The maternal uncle makes small gifts to his nephews and nieces, and a father and mother will make gifts to their own children. Brothers and sisters and husband and wife also make free gifts of food or betel-nuts and no return is expected. Gifts from a man to the relatives of his fiancée are not in this class, for they are ritual and considered part of a marriage payment. A few of the Lesu people who had been

431

[432]

¹ An exception to this occurs in times of drought or famine. Then food such as sago may be bought from natives on another part of the island, because there is no taro crop.

432 had to borrow the *tsera* from his clan relatives to pay Garrili
576 for the pig. When the feast was held, Kadecka was so
626 ashamed of his hasty action that he stayed in the house most
of the time, but all of his relatives and many other people
from the village, as well as Garrili, were there. The latter
stood up and made a speech, telling how he had been asked
by Kadecka for the pig, remarking that he had planned to
bring it when Kadecka's old mother died, but Kadecka
had asked for it, and so here it was. Then one by one the
important old men made speeches condemning Kadecka's
action. They asked sternly why Kadecka did not wait until
his mother died. He made no defence for his inexcusable
action.

The whole affair caused a great deal of gossip, and public
opinion was unanimous in condemning Kadecka. A week
later he "signed on" when a recruiter for native labour came
through the village, and no one expressed any regret when
he left. It was obviously an escape from an intolerable social
position.

438 Besides pigs, other objects, such as ornaments, spears,
drums, and canoes, are sold for set prices which never vary,
435 and the payments are made in public. These objects, how-
ever, do not form the ordinary objects of trade; first, because
sometimes they are inherited, and, secondly, because one
such object, like an ornament, a drum, a spear, lasts a
lifetime. Pigs, on the other hand, are constantly being sold
because they are eaten continually at ritual feasts.

PAYMENTS FOR SERVICES

789 It is obvious that one cannot accumulate wealth through
trading in pigs or any other objects, for there is no profit.
424 But the rendering of services, magical or otherwise, that is
434 another story. The possession of magic is the most important
source of wealth. Among these people magic is all powerful

583 seen how the husband makes a payment of *tsera* to the mother
437 and close clan relatives of the bride, and how he is assisted
by his own clan relatives in collecting the necessary payment.
But the payment could in no way be considered a purchase.
It has the binding force of a rite, and has the same function
that the church or court-house has in the marriage rites of
our culture. The marriage of a girl involves no loss to her
clan. Residence is matrilocal; the community receives a
new member and hence a new worker; the clan relatives
receive frequent gifts of fish and services in the garden from
the husband. No family marries off a daughter to receive
the payment, yet she could not be married without the pay-
ment any more than a girl in a Western civilization could be
married without a church or legal ceremony of some kind.¹

437 We can see how the principles of payment and reciprocity
183 are much more than economic laws, operating exclusively
in the realm of barter, but are instead forces underlying the
whole culture. Nothing, with the exception of food between
kindred and friends, can be given or done for nothing.

TRADE BETWEEN GROUPS—SALE OF A *MALANGGAN*

438 The principle of reciprocity applies to group as well as to
individual, and is brought out in the sale of a *malanggan*,
as described below. This transaction comes under the
heading of trade, and is the sale of the right to make a ritual
carving and the rites connected with it. The *malanggan* and
its significance in mortuary rites are described in Chapter
VIII. Here only the economic import of the sale is noted.

Poinbi and Kanot, of the village of Logagon, about twenty-
five miles from Lesu, and belonging to another linguistic

¹ When I described our marriage customs to my native friends, they were quite scandalized at the lack of payment, and asked how it could be a true marriage. They were almost equally shocked at the Continental custom of the bride bringing a dowry. One native compared a Christian marriage with no payment to the mating of pigs.

WORK

211

unit, want to make a *malanggan* for Watlau, who has been dead for some time. Kanot is his son and Poinbi his maternal nephew.¹ Poinbi is the one who comes to Lesu to buy the *malanggan* and attends to all the business concerning it. Kanot goes to Tabar, where he has clan relatives, in order to get their financial assistance for the enterprise. 438 ●

In the middle of August Poinbi comes to Lesu and makes arrangements to buy from Palou the right to make the *Puiba malanggan* of the *Sasabwan* class. Palou is the leading old man of the Sinpop clan, and learned the design and rites connected with the *Puiba malanggan* from his maternal uncle and grandfather. They had learned it in a dream from their *gas*. Palou consents to sell it, and thus relinquishes his right to make this particular kind of *malanggan*. It is understood that the payments will be made when it is finished and the rites are held. 437 424

Poinbi returns to Logagon, and a few days later the making of the *malanggan* begins. All the men from Penguli (Palou's hamlet) go to the bush to cut down a tree trunk; they come back in the afternoon singing gaily as they walk with their heavy load. There is a festive air about the beginning of the undertaking. Later Palou pays them with tobacco and coconuts. A small house is now made on the beach near the cemetery, and Palou marks its completion with a feast for all the men who have helped build it. He buys a pig from Manumat for the occasion, and there are also taro and coconuts. Palou will pay the women who have contributed the taro after he has been paid by Poinbi at the conclusion of the rites. 532 476

Kanua, the skilled carver of Lesu, now begins to work. Palou pays him one *tsera* in advance, and sits with him in the little house, showing him how to carve the *malanggan*. 532

¹ There is thus a contradiction here—a clan and a non-clan relative co-operating to make a *malanggan* for the same dead person. This is one of the exceptions always occurring in any functioning society.

437 morning they go to their gardens. Some find them intact,
while in others the pigs have wrought havoc, as was feared.
484 They settle into the accustomed routine, and are obviously
glad to be back.

437 Two days after the return to Penguli there is a feast to
mark the occasion of cleaning the little house in which the
malanggan was made. The chips of wood and other debris
are carefully swept out of the house. There is sago for the
feast, and the men are busy preparing it, while the women
scrape the taro which will accompany it. The sago is shredded
[52] until it is mealy, mixed with water and made into a loaf,
similar to bread. It is then wrapped in leaves and baked in
the *liga*. At the feast Ongas, the Luluai and orator, makes
[537] a speech recounting all the past events—the making of
the *malanggan*, taking it to Logagon, the rites there, and the
payment for it, and now this marks the conclusion of the
rites.

- 438 Almost three months have elapsed since Poinbi first came
to Penguli and made arrangements for the making of the
556 *malanggan*. There has been much ritual dancing and feasts.
Poinbi and his group have expended a great deal of wealth.
He and his community are poor now, but he has honoured
his dead relatives and acquired much prestige. Those who
have helped him have also acquired prestige. The acquisition
of the right to make the *malanggan*, which they bought from
Palou, is also a financial asset, for eventually they will resell
the right to make this *malanggan* to someone else and get all
the wealth back which they have now laid out. Palou and his
associates have lost the right to make the *malanggan*, but
are rich. Eventually they too will use this wealth to buy
the right to make a new *malanggan*.

438 A social and ceremonial undertaking has set a very large
amount of wealth into circulation. The economic transaction
has been on a communal scale, with two men acting as
leaders, and the principle of everything (service or material

WORK

223

object) being paid for has operated here as in all other 438
social and economic transactions.

SUMMARY

We have seen the economic structure as it functions within 182
the framework of the social organization. The family, clan, 511
moiety, village, and sex groups all act at certain times as
economic units. The family tills the soil; the clan owns
property, regulates inheritance, and assumes economic
responsibilities for many important rites; it is through the
moiety that the principle of reciprocity so actively functions;
the village owns property and acts as an economic unit in
certain undertakings; and sex is the most significant factor
in regulating the division of labour.

The essentials of life are communally owned and fairly
easy to secure. Since there is an abundance of land and no
private ownership of it, and also no private fishing or hunting
rights, only industry is required to secure food. The same
absence of private property in land makes shelter an easy
matter. The bush provides the material; the land is free;
everyone knows the rudiments of house-building; and the
assistance of relatives is readily secured for a slight compensa-
tion. Clothing practically did not exist in the past, and is
very slight and of little significance to-day. There is, there-
fore, no problem in securing the fundamentals of food,
shelter, and clothing. Yet there is private property: orna-
ments, implements of work, currency, pigs, knowledge
(medical and magical), are all privately owned. There is
wealth and there are rich men, but poverty does not exist.
Moreover, everyone lives in the same style. The house, food,
and general manner of daily living is the same for everyone,
regardless of his amount of wealth. The importance of
wealth is that it allows a man to make the elaborate rites
for his dead ancestors, and so gain prestige for himself.

MORTUARY RITES IN NEW IRELAND

33

the payments are ritually made to the owners of the pigs which were consumed at the feast, to the dancers, and to those who carried the corpse to the grave. In each case it is a close clan relative, a son, or mother's sister's son, a mother, or a mother's brother who makes the payments. It is never the surviving consort. While one person, such as a son, is considered responsible for the feast, he is assisted by other members of his clan (which is the same as that of the dead person). At the funeral of the old woman, Maling, there were fifteen pigs, all contributed, or rather paid for, by the members of her clan. Her mother's sister's son contributed three, and each one of the other clan relatives one. Most of these pigs were purchased from other people, regardless of clan or moiety, and it was to these people that the payments were made. The man making the payment held up a piece of *tsera* (shell currency) and called out the name of the man or woman to whom he was paying it and mentioned also what the payment was for. At another funeral there were ten pigs and a total payment of 39 *tsera* made for them, 32 out of the 39 being paid by clan relatives of the dead person. The remaining 7 were paid by the following three people, her husband, the chief (whose father was of the same clan as the dead woman), and another man who was of the same moiety, but of a different clan from the dead woman. This man was unmarried and most of his clan relatives were dead. He was a classificatory brother of the dead woman and she had frequently given him food. His contribution now of two *tsera* for a small pig was considered as a reciprocal gift to her. The general rule is that clan relatives pay for all the pigs and services. The exceptions just noted merely indicate that this primitive society is, like all societies, flexible in carrying out its rules.

The officiating clan relative also makes the payment to the dancers and pall-bearers.

The taro for the feast is contributed by all the women of the hamlet and the neighbouring hamlets, the clan relatives bringing a little bit more than the others, but in the matter of taro there is no fine distinction drawn as in the case of payment for pigs. Every woman brings the taro from her garden, and it involves no question of payment. Taro is never sold on any occasion, but pigs are a common object of trade.

466 frequently happens that the plantation owner or manager is thus brought intimately in touch with all the people of the villages to which his employees belong, and one hears of many acts of kindness and consideration on the part of the employers towards the fellow-villagers of their labourers, such as the free treatment of sick, &c. I heard of one planter on the east coast road who not only places his plantation hospital at the disposal of the people of surrounding villages, but both he and his wife actually go among them and encourage them to come in whenever they are in need of careful treatment, to this end often incurring considerable expense in drugs and food.

500 I think that the employment of local natives should be encouraged in every way possible. As I have pointed out already, it is far more economical for the planter to secure his labourers from adjacent villages than to recruit them from other parts of New Guinea. It also lessens the drain on the population if able-bodied men available for plantation work serve on some place near enough to their villages to enable them to continue the thread of village life. For these reasons I have made a recommendation to the Administration that the recruiting of natives of the Kavieng-Karu district for work outside New Ireland, excepting for skilled and domestic work, be prohibited.

The few that engage in skilled labour and domestic work in other parts of the Territory make no appreciable difference to village life, and, since work of that kind provides an avenue of usefulness to natives adapted for it, I think it should be kept open for them. What is desired is to prevent the district being drained of its best blood. This can be effected by prohibiting general recruiting for work in other districts.

464 In examining the tables, we find that the percentage of natives under indenture is larger in some villages than in others. Where these natives are engaged on local plantations the numbers are, for reasons given, not so alarming as they appear to be. In fact, it suggests a trend in the right direction, for in proportion to the number of local natives employed is indicated the influence of the employer and the manner in which he is fulfilling his part in the work of progress.

FOOD.

262 The usual native foods are planted in the gardens, and people of the coastal villages appear able to secure fish, lobsters, and various shell fish. Pigs are bred in the villages, and wild pigs are hunted in the bush. In the mountain villages vegetable food is more plentiful than on the coast, where the ground is not so fertile, and gardens, especially those of certain villages, are some distance away. There is, however, constant trade in foods between the bush and coastal communities

which gives each of them what they lack. In the vicinity of Lambuso, 438
Pinigindu, Lemasong and Lugagun are sago swamps, which are relied [261]
upon in time of famine to support the people of the lower road, the
owners then reaping large supplies of shell-money by selling the
sago.

Dry spells from time to time produce food shortages, but as a rule 731
these are apparently not very serious. In 1914 (?), however, no rain
fell for about a year (?), and the people were in great distress. The
whole country suffered from drought, and, excepting from the sago
swamps, there was practically no food procurable. The period of
drought and famine culminated in a series of destructive bush fires
along the whole line of coast, bush and mountain ranges, and, from
the graphic descriptions given to me, everything perished—wallabies, in
fact, have scarcely been seen since. It is extremely probable that a
great loss of life followed this period of famine. The natives said that
only those with plenty of shell-money were able to keep themselves
supplied with sago. People scattered far and wide, especially in the
direction of Tabr, looking for food.

The natives now divide their time between work in their gardens 421
and work on road maintenance, and it is possible that in some areas 491
the demands of the road at times lead to neglect of garden work. The
people of the mountain villages have villages on the coast, to which 651
they come for a few days when their road services are due. I think
this division of work and the areas for which the various villages are
responsible should be made the subject of a special investigation by
the district officials. Mr. Waugh, the District Officer, has in mind
a scheme for the maintenance of a mobile road gang, with adequate
transport facilities. If something of the kind were possible the natives
could spend more time in their gardens and coco-nut groves.

HOUSING.

When I first went down the Kavieng road in 1924 most of the 342
natives' houses were small, neat-looking, rectangular structures built 362
on piles some feet above the ground. This was a standard pattern
that had been introduced by the District Officials. On this occasion,
however, I noticed that in most of the villages the people were living
in their old type of house. Whether these are healthier than the
introduced structures I cannot tell, but it seems to me much better
to improve the structure they desire to live in than to force them to
build houses which they will probably vacate as soon as the Govern-
ment official's back is turned. The type of house, the erection of it,
and everything connected with it, is definitely part of native culture
and as such should be preserved as far as possible.